MARCUS BENJAMIN

A Sketch

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MARCUS BENJAMIN, editor, born in San Francisco, California, on January 17, 1857. He is of distinguished American lineage and is the eighth in descent from Joseph, the fifth son (the first born in America) of John Benjamin, who came from England on the ship Lion, and arrived in Boston in September, 1632. His great-great-grandfather, Capt. Nathan Benjamin, served in the War of the Revolution. The distinguished Washburn family, of whom Elihu B. represented the State of Illinois; Israel, the State of Maine; Cadwallader C., the State of Wisconsin; and William D., the State of Minnesota simultaneously in Congress were the sons of Martha Benjamin, a descendant in the sixth generation of John Benjamin. She is said to have been a woman of "great force of character" and her sons inherited her disposition. Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs, the famous Quartermaster-General of the Army of the Potomac, was a grandson of Clara Benjamin, likewise a descendant of John Benjamin. Of less remote connection are Park Benjamin and Samuel G. W. Benjamin, the well-known littérateurs.

He is also descended from Capt. Nathaniel

the editorial staff of "Johnson's Universal Cyclopedia" but resigned that connection to assist Dr. G. Brown Goode in the preparation of a history of the half century of the existence of the Smithsonian Institution to which work he contributed the chapters on Chemistry and Meteorology. On April 1, 1896, he was appointed Editor of the U. S. National Museum in Washington, which place he has since held. During 1896–'7 he was also connected with the editorial staffs of "The Encylopædic Dictionary" and "Zell's Encyclopædia."

Other literary labors have included translation of Bertholet's "Explosive Materials" (1883), copies of which by order of their respective governments were placed in the libraries of all American and English men of war; authorship of *The Druggist's Circular* prize essay on "Disinfectants" (1885); the preparation of two chapters for the "Memorial History of New York City," notably one for the fourth volume on "The Development of Science in New York City" (1891–2); and a sketch entitled "A Hero and a Martyr" (1892) written for the "Liber Scriptorum" of the Author's Club of which he is a member. He has also written for various periodicals including *The Chautaquan*, *Harper's Weekly*, *The Cosmopolitan* and *The Popular Science Monthly*. The corresponding chapter in chemistry of the Agassiz Association was organized in 1892 chiefly through his influ-

ence, and he was its president until 1896. In 1893 he was a member of the International Jury of Awards at the World's Fair in Chicago, serving especially in the sections having to do with chemistry. In 1896 he was appointed a member of the Assay Commission by President Cleveland.

The honorary degree of A. M. was conferred on him by Lafayette College in 1888 and that of Ph. D. by the University of Nashville in 1889. He is a life Fellow of the London Chemical Society and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a member of the American Chemical Society, the Society of Chemical Industry, and other scientific societies.

Dr. Benjamin has been active in the various patriotic societies, and in 1896 was chosen Historian of the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution in the District of Columbia, and he was one of the founders of the Society of the War of 1812 in the District of Columbia, of which he was elected a Vice-President. He is a member of the Society of Colonial Wars in virtue of descent from eight ancestors, a member of the Society of Colonial Governors, and a member of the Society of Mayflower Descendants, in virtue of his descent from Governor Bradford, and a member of the St. Nicholas Society of New York.

For some years he has been a collector of American pottery and his collection is one of

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the best in the country. He also made a collection of the portraits and autographs of the members of the National Academy of Sciences which, on its completion, being absolutely unique, he deposited in the U. S. National Museum in Washington, and it was exhibited by the Government at the World's Fair in Chicago, and also at the Exposition in Atlanta in 1895, receiving a medal at both places.